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By-lines

As the author of numerous books and articles on children's play, RUTH E. HARTLEY is particularly well qualified to tell us how to have *Fun Without Tears*, in this issue of CHILD STUDY. The mother of two growing girls, she also teaches at CCNY and maintains a private psychological counseling practice.

ROBERT M. GOLDENSON, author of *Framework for Fun* in this issue, is Assistant Professor of Psychology at Hunter College. A frequent contributor to national magazines, he also leads parents' groups and conducts his own TV program.

Competitive Sports and the Awkward Child, a subject of long-standing interest to LAWRENCE S. KUBIE, M.D., is discussed most perceptively here. Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Yale University School of Medicine, and on the faculty of the N. Y. Psychoanalytic Institute, he also maintains a private practice.

ALETHEA T. BECKHARD, Director of the Camping Division of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., and Chairman, Field Services Committee of the American Camping Association, offers us the benefit of her broad knowledge and experience in her article on *Choosing a Camp*.

Associate Visiting Dentist, NYU-Bellevue Medical Center, a member of the American Association of Orthodontists and the American Dental Association, J. H. SILLMAN, D.D.S., discusses thumbsucking in a straightforward and reassuring manner.

HAROLD K. ADDELSTON, D.D.S., is Chairman of the Department of Dentistry for Children, NYU College of Dentistry. His article on the roles of both dentist and parent in introducing the child to dentistry gives ample evidence of his understanding of and experience with the problem.

Cover photograph by GEORGE HEIER.

A day for the family

Julia Lathrop, the first chief of the Children's Bureau, suggested in 1916 that May Day should be Children's Day and that it should signify "not only a festival but also, year by year, a celebration of some increase in the common store of practical wisdom with which the young life of the Nation is guarded by each community."

For many years after Child Health Day was first proclaimed by the President in 1928, its observance emphasized the physical aspects of children's health. Now, gains in knowledge have sharpened our awareness that in order to have truly healthy bodies children must be healthy in mind and spirit as well. To give a child the sense of emotional well-being we must offer more than good food, thoughtful care and safe surroundings. We must supply also a setting in which he can use his creative energies and enjoy satisfying companionship both with his parents and his peers. How better can we focus attention on these latter demands than by emphasizing May Day as "Family Play Day"? For play is a child's way of fully utilizing his capabilities.

Spring and summer are the times when parents should grasp every chance to give children the advantages of the world of nature, from which school rooms and city life have all too often cut them off. Crowded into small living quarters, it is hard to keep relations between parents and children harmonious. But when both can spill over into the outdoors, shed their constricting winter clothing and relax in the sun, nagging worries drop off, too.

The emphasis on May Day as Family Play Day this year is not a haphazard choice. Rather, it arises from the realization that bold, constructive thought is needed if we are to find ways of bringing into our children's lives the sunshine of good mental health, and of making the high spirits which encourage sound growth a reality in their lives.

DR. MARTHA M. ELIOT
Chief, U.S. Children's Bureau

Fun without tears

Real fun—the contagious kind—is a built-in part of companionable family living and not a separate department labeled "recreation"

Emily Hoskins startled the Parents' Group which was discussing recreation and the difficulty of finding things that the whole family could do together. "We don't have much trouble that way," she announced. "We don't try to do anything planned just for the children."

"But you *have* to," one of the group remonstrated. "It's your duty. All the experts say so."

"Oh, we tried it," said Emily, "but we found it just didn't work. When the children were small we played dreary little games with pointers and counters that were supposed to be chickens and bunnies. But pretty soon Don would begin to yawn, and I'd start to think about something else, and the children would be fighting about whose turn it was because we lost track. Later we tried counting and spelling games, but those were no good either. If we got ahead of the children they pouted, and if we held back they acted as if we were insulting them, and accused us of not really trying. The trips that everyone said were good for them were usually flops. For one thing, they wouldn't pay attention to the marvels and wonders they were supposed to observe and we felt our efforts had gone for nothing. When we got home we were tired and cross. But since we've stopped

trying, we're all having a wonderful time."

"But what do you *do*," Myra demanded, "in the evenings, for instance?"

Emily grinned. "Just now we're playing roulette," she replied.

Myra looked outraged.

"It's quite simple," Emily went on. "Some friends who had just returned from Europe were visiting us the other day and spoke of the gambling casinos there. The children were fascinated, so Don bought a toy roulette outfit, table layout and all, and every evening we take turns being *croupier*. You should hear Maggie piping, '*Faites vos jeux, faites vos jeux, mesdames et messieurs, faites vos jeux.*' Thousands of dollars pass across the board every night, and Helen is getting quite good at figuring odds. In fact, she's enlisted the help of her math teacher in an effort to break the bank."

Though Mrs. Hoskins may have sounded flippant, she and her husband were very serious about their family responsibilities. But they had learned that no experience could be really happy for the children if their parents were not also enjoying it.

The family makes the fun

In the privacy of our own thoughts, most of us would admit that, at times, we face

up to family recreation as a chore rather than a pleasure. Like athletes that are overtrained, we tend to press a little, in our eagerness to give our children everything that is good. We have been made too self-conscious about something that can be an integral part of family life, rather than an elaborate and separate adjunct.

The families that care greatly about the children's happiness are usually those where being a part of the family group is in itself a unique pleasure. It means being a privileged member of a closed circle, with access to a private store of jokes, allusions with special meanings, and delicious secrets. It entitles one to group support and free admission to group events. Above all, it provides a haven where one is accepted at face value, with no strings attached.

But this, one might object, is not *fun*; this is only part of family life. What, then, do we mean by "fun"? Hilarity? Jokes? Stunts? Tricks? Entertainment? Or do we mean more inclusively the good moments in life? The precious times when care is set aside and the spirit soars freely? The sharing of that indescribable sensation we call "well-being"?

If we agree that the latter constitutes "fun" we can see that family fun is an almost inescapable accompaniment to the family state itself. No group can live intimately together, with tolerance and good fellowship, without sharing some of the pleasurable aspects of life. Children take part in their parents' moods by contagion. Whatever brings about relaxation, gaiety, light-heartedness, satisfaction in one will spread to and include the other.

The timeless joys

We know a father who admits frankly that he enjoys using his pre-school daughter's fingerpaints. "It's fun to whoosh that stuff around," he says. "She whooshes on her paper and I whoosh on mine, and we like it!"

During the time he spends away from home, this father is a hard-working partner in a grocery store. The activity he chooses

to share with his child is the very thing that would be a fine aid to relaxation for him under any circumstances, but his daughter offers him an impeccable excuse to indulge in it. And because it is good for *him*, and not something he does just to please her, it forms a genuine bond between them.

Under the overlay of duties and obligations, we all carry within us a corner of childhood that waits quietly to be recognized, offering in return the gift of well-being and serenity. For the joys of childhood are in their essence timeless. We do not lose them or outgrow them, although we may turn away from them. The child's frank pleasure in sensation—the delicious feeling of water on the skin, the warmth of the sun, the sheer joy of movement—this is ours for the taking. The incomparable thrill of creating something that had no existence before never wanes. These things we can share with our children as naturally and effortlessly as we breathe.

Split-level fun

When it comes to finding projects which hold equal values for both sexes and several ages, it is best to forget conventional patterns and let our inclinations steer us. The only essential is that these activities should offer a variety of things to do, so that each person can find his niche and use his own skills, big or small.

One family we know found their project through the ownership of a dog. Offhand, no observer would have put this down as a "doggy" family, but the children, like all children, wanted a pet. However, the father insisted that if the family was to have a dog, it should be a good specimen, purebred, and registered with the national kennel club. The wisdom of the choice was soon evident. Because the breed he chose, after carefully looking over the field, was not one of the most popular, the breed club was small enough to offer real contact among members. As a purebred, registered specimen, the dog could be entered in con-

formation shows. A whole new world of interests and contacts opened up to this family. The idea of entering Laurie in competition with others of his breed gave the children a definite objective to aim for, and they found trimming and training more fascinating than movies. Week-ends were not long enough to contain all their new activities—learning how to “handle” a dog in the showing, finding out about the “points” the judges looked for, exercising the dog so that he would be in good condition for his showing. The money saved on movies paid for the entry fees, and the whole family was filled with pleasant excitement.

Other families get this kind of shared pleasure in renovating an old home; still others take to square dancing. Parents and children who have a common interest in nature are lucky, of course; but it may be a passion for Scrabble or kite flying (this, by the way, is practically a new sport since flexible kites came on the market) that really rouses enthusiasm. The main point is to start with the “urge” and not with a blueprint of something “worthwhile” which just doesn’t happen to appeal to any member of the family.

No need for nostalgia

There is a tendency among parents to think nostalgically of their own childhood joys as being lost forever, but actually many of them can be recaptured for our own children if we are willing to accept

new ways. We need not sigh for the remembered joy of the family reading circle; we need only recognize its equivalents in modern dress. Every family, for example, can find at least one television program that they all watch with pleasure. Nor do we need to despise the comic book or Sunday comic supplement as a means of family communication—as each, in its heyday, passes from hand to hand, it gives rise to a short-lived but relished common “lingo” and to private family jokes.

Bebop, jive, the contortions of the jitterbug need not be the exclusive possessions of the young. Accepted with good humor, they become echoes of the extravagances of our own growing up, and help establish a healthy sense of continuity with our sons and daughters.

Invitation to sharing

Modern parents tend to underestimate themselves. They are so intent on what the children need that they often overlook what they themselves have to give. We have become too humble.

The mother who reads poetry to her children because *she* loves it is inviting them to participate in the most precious pleasure she knows. This is also true of the parent who loves to cook, or the one for whom the product of his hands represents the essence of enjoyment. And if this sharing is offered freely, *as an invitation and not a command*, the children will be tempted at least to explore it.

America worries about its leisure

"We are all of us—that is, almost all—members of the leisure class, and face its problems . . . It is, of course, characteristic of American life that our bonanzas, our windfalls, whether treasures of the soil or treasures of the self, have been interpreted by the most sensitive and responsible among us as problems."

This quotation, and others in this issue, are from "Changes in Leisure Attitudes," by David Riesman, which originally appeared in the Antioch Review, Winter 1953, and are here used with the permission of publisher and author.

Let us repeat that if an invitation is to create a real community of spirit, it must remain exactly that, open to acceptance or refusal. Little pleasure lies in any experience that must be suffered against our will. This works both ways. The parent who feels driven, compelled, forced to participate in a family event contributes more by staying away. These are the separate undertakings that should be done only by those who are interested, or by one member of the family alone. Nothing will kill off family fun sooner than an insistence that *everything* be done by *everybody*.

The uses of boredom

Within the past ten years we have concentrated so intensely on children's needs that we have become a little unrealistic in some ways. For instance, we behave as if boredom were the final doom, and seem to believe it is lying in wait for children wherever adults foregather. Is that really true? And if it happens sometimes that children are bored, is that so terrifying?

Thinking back, we can remember large family and community gatherings which included all ages, from the oldest grandfather to the youngest babe, where no one took special pains to keep us from being bored. What happened there? Did we not enjoy the anonymity of the crowd, the freedom to observe without being observed? No one will deny that those gatherings helped our horizons expand, or that the subtly altered way in which we looked at things from this particular vantage point was an important part of growing up.

We must realize that not everything that looks like boredom is boredom. Sometimes it is quiet contemplation. Children need activity, but they need to look and listen too. They will confess, if they are asked, that they like to hang around and listen to grown-up talk at times. Listening, they may find the answers to questions they could not formulate in words. They discover that people differ in the way they think, and they carry away with them new and stimulating notions to mull over.

As for real boredom, the authentic, deadening article—that, too, is something we must learn to live with. Very few of us can escape completely all those situations which offer us no positive, personal stimulation. The effective management of boredom is a skill which grows with practice. Occasional bouts will do no harm even to the young, provided adults don't view these intervals with feelings of guilt and alarm.

The importance of loafing

When Wordsworth said "Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers," he spoke for our generation as well as his own. The world is too much with us. We need to retire from it now and then to recharge our energies. So do our children; their battles are as demanding and exhausting as our own. Doing is not all; being is important, too. Like the land, people also need to lie fallow.

When a child recently said to his mother "I wish we had more time together—you know, not to do anything, just to hang around" he was voicing a universal need. Serene Sunday afternoons—nothing to cope with for hours and hours; or summer days at the beach, the family basking drowsily in the sun—don't these times spent together bring a sense of sharing, of communication, as strong as any of the days full of moving and doing? In our eagerness to give our children full lives, let us not omit the blessings of simple loafing.

Memories and accolades

"Do you remember—?" When this phrase is followed by nostalgic reminiscences or by giggles, then we know that we have had some success in making enjoyment an ingredient of family life. These recollections of jokes or rituals or sprees are our rewards, our marks of merit, our seals of approval. They testify that some of our lightest moments have more durability and meaning than many of our solemn and laborious undertakings. Family fun is a solid family heritage.

Framework for fun

The stage is set for play—we have the time and the tools. But it takes imaginative handling to make the best of both for our children

By Robert M. Goldenson

No more appropriate time could be found, and no more fitting place than CHILD STUDY, for re-examining the place of play in family life. Today, the materials, knowledge and training we need for hobbies, sports, arts and crafts are more available than ever before—and so are the funds for these pursuits (in 1952, 12 million dollars were spent on coin and stamp collections; in 1953, 150 millions on home power tools). In our schools we no longer draw a sharp line between curricular and extra-curricular activities, and both at school and at home we look upon recreation as a means of adding something important to life and not merely as a way of killing time.

The amount of time available to both men and women for out-of-office and non-housework activities is now so great that there is even danger people will fill it with "made work" or with activities which exhaust more than refresh. The stage is set for family play on a new and expanded scale. But if we are to use it successfully, we have to bring all these scattered social, economic and mechanical changes together and focus them on the growing personalities of our children—and, one hopes, of ourselves. More thought about home recreation is needed, more realization of what play can do not only for the individual youngster but for family life as well. The purpose of this article is to suggest some concrete approaches to these questions.

Many parents go to one of two extremes

with regard to their children's play. To one large group, play is of little concern since it seems to take care of itself. Children have such a potent urge to play that there seems to be no problem of motivation, as there is for work. To these parents the only real question is how to keep the children relatively quiet and out of mischief. To the other group—a growing minority—play presents a serious "problem." Determined to make the most of everything in their children's lives, these parents drive their offspring—literally as well as figuratively—to all kinds of overorganized activities that are "good for them." Theirs is the endless assembly-line approach. They give their children little chance to choose what they want to do, and less chance to absorb the benefits in peace and quiet. Fun and pleasure are secondary; skill and social success are uppermost. Play becomes a duty, rarely a delight.

Surely we can find a mid-point between these two extremes. The enormous contributions of play to healthy development can be cultivated without sacrificing its essential nature as pleasurable activity. It can be energetic without being tense, creative without being exhibitionistic, flexible without being chaotic, guided without being rigidly controlled. And the place where the child can first learn to get the best from play is not in school or on the playground but at home.

The impulse to play comes naturally. The average child has a constitutional urge

to manipulate, dramatize, make things, imprint feelings and ideas on materials. Nevertheless, all youngsters need guidance, from time to time, in making their play interesting and productive. Without hovering over our children or making a task of it, we can be ready to promote the play processes that are in keeping with each stage of development, whether it's "peek-aboo" with the one-year old, block-building with the three-year old, showing the four-year old how to stir the batter or handle blunt scissors, planning trips to a factory and an airport with the five- or six-year old, or supplying picture books or records that will enable him to follow up the new interests he acquires. A hint here and a remark there will help to expand the nine-year old's interest in stamps into a desire to learn about the countries from which they came. Imaginative parents can find many ways to make play more rewarding to their children. In fact, it is as important to teach a child to play as it is to teach him to work.

Doing things together

Actually the child does not start out with a distinction between work and play. In a recent study conducted by the New Rochelle Guidance Center, in which 1500 school children were asked "What do you think makes a happy family?" the most frequent answer was "doing things together," and it seemed to make little difference whether it was "working together" or "playing together." In fact, most of the children would probably have accepted the following example of family happiness, given by a fifth-grader: "We have a pretty big lawn,

and one day last summer we seeded the whole lawn, fertilized it and rolled it to make it look nice. We worked from early in the morning until late at night. Everybody was happy and proud. We'd like to do it again." The key word is not work or play, but "we." Just being together is three-quarters of the fun.

Planning the home for play

More and more, we have homes today that work well. But what we need just as much are homes that play well. Preparing the home can itself be a form of play and, of course, a source of long-term projects in which both generations can take part. Here are a few general suggestions. It is frequently possible to double the play space in a child's room by using a bunk with drawers beneath, or by building a "space-divider" between the sleeping and play areas, with one side for storing clothes and the other for toys. A homemade easel will encourage the child to paint, a small platform in the corner (plus a prop box of old clothes and paraphernalia) will stimulate dramatic play, a solid workbench will invite him to crafts or woodworking.

Time and temper will be saved if somewhere in the house a whole closet is set aside for skates, games, jumping ropes, baseball gloves, etc.; and if none is available, a closet might be built in the basement, garage or against the rear of the house. Also, shelves, pigeonholes and hooks should be provided for each article and labelled accordingly, otherwise the closet will become a catch-all and lead to chaos. In addition, families with private homes might consider building a playroom in the basement, where the younger child can bring his gang, where teenagers can entertain their friends in relative privacy, where the parents can hold carefree and imaginative parties and where the whole family can dance, sing and play games together without concern for the living room furniture.

The backyard should be designed with

UNESCO nursery school pamphlet

A pamphlet, *Mental Hygiene in the Nursery School*, has just been published by UNESCO (25c from the Columbia University Press, New York 27). This report of the joint WHO-UNESCO Expert Meeting, held in Paris in 1951, conveys a very informative, interesting picture of the nursery school field as seen through the eyes of eight European experts.

Play
is not
always
"free"

David Riesman

"I think we can say . . . that the child's play serves as the principal model for all later efforts to free leisure time from its burdens and to cope with its puzzling ambiguities. We all of us know, if we think about it, that children's play is by no means always free and spontaneous; it is often filled with terror and morbidity; but at its best it is surely one of the unequivocally good things of this earth, and no wonder we try to recapture it as *Paradise Lost*. But if we look closely at children's play we can observe something else which may even give us a clue as to how that recapture can, in part, be achieved, namely that the child's greatest satisfaction appears to arise from experiences of mastery and control . . . Play seems to reside in a margin, often a narrow one, between tasks which are too demanding, and those which are not demanding enough to require the excited concentration of good play. A child or adult who is simply going through the motions is not engaged in play or leisure as we have been talking about it here, however the society may define it. But without some social forms for leisure and play, forms which have to be broken through, yet have to be there to be broken through, I do not think we will have much play either. For the demand that play be constantly spontaneous, unchanneled by social forms, is too overwhelming; spontaneity, as we have already seen, is lost if we strive too hard for it."

the same care as the house itself. Begin by finding out just what each member of the family would like—it may turn out that the youngest members would rather have a dirt pile or a "cave" than any formal equipment or carefully prepared area. Then lay out the yard on paper in order to make the maximum use of the limited space. With a bit of planning, even a small plot can adapt itself to a wide variety of activities, such as garden plots, a swing, a sandbox, a horseshoe pitching area and a bird feeding station. If you are including any kind of court—for volleyball or badminton, for instance—be sure it's easily convertible to other uses: the craze of today may be completely neglected tomorrow.

Homemade humor

In considering the subject of play we can too easily lose sight of the fact that attitudes are just as important as activities. Nothing binds a family closer together than laughter; and where there is a general atmosphere of gaiety and cheerfulness, one does not need to look for things to laugh

about—they just crop up by themselves. Family humor does not have to be profound, nor does it have to make much sense. Suppose at the dinner table, a mother turns to her talkative eight-year old, intending to say, "Don't talk with food in your mouth," but says by mistake, "Don't eat with food in your mouth." With that slip of the tongue a bit of family lore is created, one that loses none of its appeal by frequent repetition. Or, to use another example, young Danny counts his presents after his birthday party and comes up with the wry remark, "Huh! Eight kids and only seven presents. One of them got in free!" Jokes like these would hardly occur in homes where tension or solemnity prevail; at least, they would go by unnoticed. The ability to make the best of a bad thing, to meet difficult situations with assurance and a sense of proportion need cultivation, and certainly one of the most effective means is through homely, everyday humor. It is just as important to teach our children to take some things lightly as it is to take others seriously.

Telling the poor athlete to be a "good sport" is useless; letting him give up entirely is no answer either. Are there better ways to help him?

By Lawrence S. Kubie

Competitive sports and the awkward child

As a boy, I battled with my native ineptitude in all athletic skills. In later years, as I watched many youngsters grow to maturity I observed that these children had many of the problems which had confronted me. This rekindled my interest in the neuromuscular and emotional factors which determine physical skills; and I have continued ever since to study this struggle, as it occurs in the lives of my patients and their children.

It is important to state at the outset that we do not yet know many of the answers. Between the physical and emotional development of the child there is a complex interplay, which affects the child's physical competence and his attitude toward athletics, exercise, dancing—indeed, towards anything which calls for bodily skills.

No one, whether parent, psychiatrist, neurologist or physical educator, is adequately equipped to deal with every phase of this question. Nor have psychiatrists or neurologists given parents, teachers or physical educators the help which they need; nor do lay people in most instances come to specialists demanding help.

One reason for this failure has been the overemphasis by schools and parents alike on winning and skill in organized sports. Whole communities become hysterically

involved in "getting behind" the local high school or university team. This constitutes exploitation of a few young people with outstanding skills, often for predominantly commercial reasons. It is even more dangerous when it involves youngsters of grade-school age, as in the distortions of "sportsmanship" in Little League baseball. This abuse has been well characterized by a famous coach who said that when he had good material he won games, and that when he had bad material he "built character to beat hell." Obviously this is not an approach that helps the child. Nor is the parent who puts pressure on a physically inept child to be a "good sport" likely to get good results, either in the satisfaction of his own pride as the parent of a "winner," or in the child's happiness and physical adjustment.

A better answer will have to deal adequately with the interrelationship of bodily, intellectual and emotional development. Take, for instance, a lad who was the youngest in a family. He happened to be smaller and to develop later than his two older brothers and his older sister. This may have been the result of differences in the endocrine system, and/or of special quirks in eating habits. Actually, in this instance, certain upsetting experiences when he was three had created severe eat-

ing problems, as a result of which the calcification of the long bones and had been delayed (as shown by later X-rays). This influenced the length of his limbs and the leverage of his muscles on his bones, and therefore the basic mobility of his body. He was the kind of toddler who was always the last to reach the ball in a run down the nursery floor. He was always the one who was bowled over by the other children in the nursery, because he was not as strong as they, and because his reflex time was slower. Therefore every contact with another youngster meant a fresh experience of pain, defeat and humiliation.

We would not ask an adult to go on placing himself in a situation in which he always was sure to take a licking. As a matter of fact, we would conclude that any adult who always did this suffered from a neurotic compulsion to put himself in the way of defeat.

The emotional impact

Yet in our society this is precisely what we expect of boys and often of girls as well, irrespective of their inherent physical endowments. One child wins easy, and often unearned, victories, while another is defeated every time he attempts to compete physically with other youngsters. Clearly the emotional impact of competitive sports upon the two will be quite different. One will develop a sense of competence, adequacy and eagerness to try new things. The other will approach every new physical challenge with anxiety, and with the constraint and the exaggerated physical awkwardness which anxiety produces.

The further history of this same child illustrates some additional facts. Every time he threw a ball he was in a state of tension and anxiety. Every time he tried to run, his legs were stiff with uneasiness. He could never use his body freely; and his body proportions were not such as to make ordinary sports easy for him. Therefore his best efforts never won him even minimal rewards.

Nonetheless, as he developed he became

an "eager beaver." He did not want to miss out on all athletic triumphs. He was no cry-baby. He did not give up immediately. He exercised secretly, flexing his biceps, squatting on his heels and going through other ritualistic exercises. He made the most of his limited physical endowments, but he could never catch up to the two older brothers, who had the double advantage of being older and of being physically and structurally better endowed. They had a native coordination which he never enjoyed; and they had the great psychological advantage of being habitual victors instead of habitual losers, so that they did not develop the emotional obstacles which he had to combat.

What should be done to help such a lad? Certainly one would not tell him to give up all physical activity. Nor, on the other hand, should we overlook the psychological consequences of the fact that every effort at physical competition places him in a situation which is emotionally loaded against him. If at times he gives up we have no right to look upon him as a quitter or as yellow. There must be some solution for this lad, but it does not help to pretend that it is easy to find.

The effect of adult quirks

It is important to keep it in mind that our own emotional quirks as adults influence our search for a solution. The earlier athletic triumphs and failures of adults affect their later feelings about their clumsy child. Also, there are widely varying motives, both conscious and unconscious, which determine why people set a high value on sports or why they become gym teachers, coaches and physical educators. How many, for instance, choose their careers as teachers of physical education merely because sports have come easily to them? Will such adults have any sympathy for inept youngsters? How often, conversely, are coaches or physical educators attracted to this field because they have had to struggle with the same problem themselves. Some of them will, for this

very reason, be so disturbed by youngsters who re-enact their own early struggles that they will treat these youngsters harshly. Others will have an automatic sympathy for young people with these problems. These are questions to weigh before turning the whole matter over to the athletic programs of school, camp and college.

What ultimately happened to this particular youngster is illuminating. His father was a natural athlete who took pride in the sons who were adept, and could not hide his scorn for the son who tried even harder but failed. Consequently, this lad turned in another direction, i.e., to an alliance with his mother and an intellectual sister. He became an outstanding student; so good, in fact, that he entered college simultaneously with his next older brother. He was barely sixteen. He was small, young and unsophisticated. He had less emotional maturity as well as less physical maturity than his classmates. Thus in college he found himself in a situation which duplicated the pattern of his nursery years. This threw him back into an old uneasiness and anxiety, and into the constraint which he had struggled to master in school. Although he did not go to the same college as his older brother, which made things somewhat easier for him, he was nevertheless thrown in with boys who, like his brothers, were older and more skillful. Once again his daily competitors and companions were big and adept, while he was awkward and small. What could he do but hate and envy them in secret, while trying outwardly to be friendly and a "good sport"?

More complex cases

This is a relatively uncomplicated case. More complex and disastrous situations arise in similar soil when handled with less patience, less sympathy and less intelligence than was given this boy by his parents. We cannot expect children not to exult in their triumphs; but if the adults also make the awkward youngster feel ashamed, if they do not in some measure buffer him against the physical rivalry

which leads only to defeat, the child can become defensive, hostile and seclusive, retreating into daydreams to avoid physical activity, and developing anxieties, phobias and fears of any kind of physical activity. Not infrequently this may distort a child's psychosexual development as well, so that he may swing from a heterosexual to a homosexual orientation. Lest there be any misunderstanding, I would point out at once that homosexuality is not an inevitable outcome of an inadequate athletic development. Indeed, there are vigorous and effective athletes who are nonetheless homosexual in their orientation.

Girls' problems

The manifestations of these problems in girls are similar to, but not identical with, the problems in boys. Up to a certain age the small girl who has a chance to play with boys and who is strong, healthy, vigorous and skillful gets along with boys as though she were a boy. In doing so she may actually live out a fantasy that she is a boy. That is why we call her a "tomboy." In contrast to this, the little girl who, during her first ten or twelve years of life, cannot do these things, is likely to be called a "sissy," and is under pressure, chiefly from other children, to develop physical strength and athletic skill. There is less of such adult pressure on girls, however, than on boys. Consequently, the young girl who is not adept usually does not feel as humiliated nor as inadequate as does the small boy who is physically inept. The small girl who cannot throw a ball straight can always play with dolls or carry on one of the "pretend" games that girls find satisfying beyond the age when they become "kid stuff" for boys.

Suddenly, at adolescence, however, the girl who has been on an equal footing with the boys finds herself at a disadvantage, paying a heavy price for the physique which she has built up. Some other little girl who has heretofore been regarded as a little "sissy" overnight becomes the popular one to whom all the boys pay attention.

Such a sudden change may be a deeply unhappy experience, and the girl athlete may react by losing all interest in her own physical development; or she may become actively resentful of the sports which have betrayed her. She may give up all further participation even in those sports in which she has excelled. The young girl who before puberty had been a good tennis player, a good rider, a good skier, may suddenly stop all such sports after puberty. She may, in fact, become a "bad sport," hating to lose because losing has acquired a painful symbolic significance to her. Or, since sports today are so greatly stressed, she may find that as a tennis partner or ski companion she holds on to her earlier popularity—up to a point. She may be sought after on the courts, but a wallflower at a dance. She may be like the girl of whom a seventeen-year-old boy said recently, "She's an awfully nice girl—for the daytime." She must then decide whether her athletic ability is an asset or is working against her; and she is likely to resent bitterly the boys who alternately seek her out and ignore her. These are not situations that can be corrected by telling the girl either to be a "good sport" or to be more "feminine." Again, the complex psychological forces involved must be recognized and dealt with.

Unknown physical factors

There are many things which we still do not know even about the physical factors. Between youngsters who are physically well endowed there may be wide variations in performance and in adaptation to physical activity: one one-year old scrambles along the floor with great speed, while another child inches along carefully and slowly, placing each hand and foot and knee as though he were treading on eggs. What gives rise to these differences? To what extent are they due to inherited differences? To what extent are they due to differences in the processes of birth? Or to chemical differences in the makeup of the child? Or to emotional experiences to which the newborn infant or suckling has been exposed?



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What might professionals and parents, working together, do about such differences during those first five years? Those are some of the problems which should challenge us all.

Need for new tests

We need new tests to bring out differences in inherent endowments and capacities, tests which in the field of physical aptitudes would fill the function of the psychometric tests of intellectual capacity. Such an inventory and appraisal would require a history of how the child developed, and of the emotional forces which influenced that development, of his previous training and how well he has utilized it. It would have to include some data on the family pattern, the intra-familial rivalries, etc. The ordinal position of the child (i.e., whether he is the youngest, oldest or middle child in the family) will often influence his reaction to educational efforts.

On the basis of such a "Physical Quotient"—"P.Q."—an individualized program could be devised for those youngsters who have difficulties.

A long list of variable factors influence the problems of physical education for children and young adults. Among those already referred to are body form and weight, limb length, joint structure, the briskness of the reflexes, etc. Another factor of major importance is handedness, footedness and eyedness. Modern concern with this arises not from the old-fashioned notion that a right-handed person is better off than a left-handed person, and that everybody should, therefore, be right-handed. Handedness is important because the dominance of the left side of the brain in right-handed persons, or of the right half of the brain in left-handedness, is not always complete. Where this dominance is not adequately established in the development of any individual, various kinds and degrees of interference between the two sides may arise. Sometimes ambidexterity results, but more often there is an unstable equilibrium with some degree of interference between the

two hemispheres, which produces motor difficulties and awkwardness.

The same thing applies to *footedness* and *eyedness* and to other sensory modalities. With their eyes closed, some children are able to trace with precision the shapes of objects which they have felt (as in reading Braille). They can feel the object and then reproduce it from memory, because the sensory impulses from movements of muscles and joints are precisely and sharply localized. Other youngsters become spatially lost when they close their eyes, because their capacity to orient themselves in space by means of nervous impulses from muscles, tendons and joints is not well developed. Such youngsters lack precision in handling their own bodies, and have even greater difficulty in handling moving objects in the environment.

Differences in tissue chemistry may also enter into the problem. Some people will develop a red welt from a light tap. From studies of the physiology of the skin it is known that in such individuals even light physical contact releases certain chemicals in the tissue. Such chemicals may cause a local constriction of blood vessels, muscular cramps and pain. Obviously, this must be taken into account when one child laughs off a blow at which another spouts tears. We are likely to say that the second one is a "cry-baby." Actually, these two youngsters have been subjected to quite different experiences, because in one a painful chemical has been released in the subcutaneous tissues, whereas this has not occurred in the other.

A possible school program

A time may be at hand when every youngster will go to school a week before classes start for a thorough physical evaluation, which would take all such factors into account. The physically gifted children could immediately try their hands at competitive sports, since for most of them the emotional experience of competitive sport would be both good fun and salutary. At the same time, an individualized train-

ing program could be arranged, geared to the youngsters who had any degree of handicap—a program which would constitute a recognized part of the school curriculum.

How can parents help?

Schools will not be likely to set up this kind of program without encouragement and insistence from parents. And even where there is general backing for such a step, there will be complications due to shortage of room, time, standards for physical tests, personnel, etc. In the meantime, how can parents help a child who is awkward and untalented as an athlete? It is perhaps too easy to say "stress his other aptitudes . . . build him up along other lines." This, certainly, is part of the answer, but—at least in our society—a prestige is accorded to the good athlete that is hard to win in any other way, or with comparable effort. In addition, and even more important, no child—and especially no boy—can reach maturity believing that he is incapable of meeting physical challenges without paying a heavy psychological penalty. Moreover, in our sympathy for the poorly coordinated child and his struggles, we must not begin to think of athletics as an evil, or as the preoccupation of people who are too dumb to appreciate anything more "interesting." Sports, besides their traditional values, offer an invaluable outlet for aggression; and the child who does not have this release may be trapped with fantasies and surcharged feelings that have their own disturbing consequences, and which make it even harder for him to function freely in games or physical competition of any kind.

Clearly, parents cannot pretend that they have solved the problem simply by deciding to "skip the whole thing" and by allowing their child to withdraw completely from the effort to develop physical skills. Ridicule, or repeated urging to "try" will only confirm the child's apprehensions and handicap him further. Pretending that there is no problem does not deceive him,

nor give him the triumphs for which he longs in secret.

A watchful parent, however, will certainly have a rough idea of his child's "P.Q." and can try to give, or get for him, some special training that will help him to put his best foot forward and also gradually to improve in activities where he is weak. People who can give this kind of patient and discerning training to a child are not easy to find. But if the parent is too readily exasperated by his child's failures, or too uninterested in sports himself, he might seek out a camp counselor, or a member of the school physical education department, or some older school boy who would understand the problem.

Another possibility is to steer the child into one of those activities which he can master. Sometimes those sports which require rhythmical, symmetrical activity, such as horseback riding and swimming, can be mastered by the child who cannot run, throw or catch a ball, or win a tennis game. Mountain climbing of the more modest sort is another possibility, and there are a number of others. In whatever the child tries, his chances of success will be greatly increased if his parents, at least, accept the fact that basic differences between children affect their bodily skills, and are willing to consider the possible causes in each individual case.

Tri-State Council

Dr. Gunnar Dybwad, Director of the Child Study Association of America, has recently become a member of the Executive Committee of the Tri-State Council on Family Relations. The Council is a group of professional and lay persons in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut interested in working together for the betterment of marriage and family living. It is a regional affiliate of the National Council on Family Relations and not only welcomes, but actively seeks opportunity to cooperate with any agency working directly in, or touching upon, the field of marriage and family life. For further information, write to the Secretary, Margaret G. Benz, Professor of Sociology, New York University, Washington Sq., New York 3.

What do parents want for their children—and for each particular child—from a camping experience? How can they find it?

Choosing a camp

By Alethea T. Beckhard

A few weeks ago a friend said to me at dinner, "We need some advice. Will you help us choose a camp for the two older girls?" The Bakers have three potential campers ages seven, ten and twelve. As a family they have done a great deal of camping both winter and summer. Even the seven-year old is used to sleeping out-of-doors in a bedroll and is quite able to help with the fire-building and cooking. The oldest child is careful, responsible, interested in many things but not particularly adventurous. The middle child has more ideas in a moment than many other youngsters get in the course of a day and needs to be introduced to lots of new and exciting activities. She is inclined to rush through things and her standard of performance is not as high as it might be. The youngest child has leadership tendencies that might develop faster if she were with more children of her own age.

Would the same camp do for both the older girls? If different camps had to be chosen, how could the Bakers find the right one for each child? Could they find these in the same general geographic area so that traveling expenses would not be added to fees? What about the little one, when her turn came?

Requests for this kind of advice are fairly common at this time of year for those

of us who work in the camping field. Parents who are planning to send their children to camp are faced with a bewildering array of problems, and also by the glowing claims of innumerable camps, some of which can live up to their promises, some not. True, parents can sometimes get advice from friends, or from teachers, doctors, social workers, etc. But surely there are some criteria that will be helpful where knowledgeable advice is not on tap—or where the opinions of the advisors differ, as they so often do.

Before considering such criteria, I suggest that there are some basic premises. In the first place, in this country there are camps for almost every type of need. There are camps with opportunities and emphasis in special interest fields, such as horseback riding, mountain climbing, sailing, dramatics, languages, dancing. There are camps where children can be tutored in almost any subject; there are camps planned for children with handicaps of various types. There are fine camps for families where adults and children may camp together yet not be on their own—a great boon to those who are not quite confident enough of their own skills to undertake a family camping venture without the help of experienced personnel.

Another premise is that there is no set

chronological age at which a child should go to camp. We can say that as soon as a youngster is ready to leave his home for a long period of time he is ready for a camping experience, and this is certainly the first consideration, though we have to remember that some children take separation seemingly well because they think it is expected of them. Children vary tremendously in their ability to take separation from home and we have to be guided more by their all-round independence and reaction to recent trips or visits on their own, than by what they say. Generally speaking, girls are ready to leave home for a summer at camp at an earlier age than boys. There are a number of splendid camps in the United States taking very young children, and camping has become a more accepted part of the young child's development.

A third premise, in this writer's opinion, is that parents should make a long-range "camping plan" for their children, which will try to give each child the kind of experience he needs at various stages in his growth. To send him automatically back to the same camp every year—even if it is a very good one—is to ignore the opportunities offered by different programs and different settings. It is wise to select a camp that will meet the needs of the boy or girl in any given year and perhaps expect to change camps in a year or two. Of course one should not arbitrarily insist on a change where the child continues to be happy and finds outlets for his expanding interests.

Some reasons for going to camp

Assuming that the child is ready for a camp experience, parents have probably decided to send him for one or more of the following reasons:

1. During the summer he is isolated from other children.

2. He responds better to a program planned especially for children than to surroundings where the emphasis is heavily on adults.

3. The family is not able to provide outdoor fun and activities—or just doesn't like a long stretch of country life.

4. His parents need a vacation.

5. He does better with group activities and gets bored being on his own.

6. He is an only child and needs the experience of 24-hour-a-day living with other children.

7. He comes from a large family and needs a little time out from the competition of brothers and sisters.

8. His parents remember their camping days with pleasure and want their children to have the same chance.

9. He can learn physical skills—such as swimming—under trained instructors.

Whatever the reasons for sending a child to camp, parents hope that the camp they select will fill the bill for their youngsters. Here, then, are six questions they will want to ask in making their choice:

1. Will the camper be safe and living under healthful conditions?

2. What is the program emphasis?

3. Is there a variety of activities?

4. How much chance will the camper have to take part in planning his own program?

5. What sort of leadership is there in the camp?

6. Is there evidence that cooperation between camp and parents is part of this particular camp's tradition and planning?

Besides these specifics, there are other intangibles to be considered. For instance, whether or not they are interested in formal religious observances, most parents want to know whether the camp is concerned with the child's spiritual growth. And they certainly hope that the young camper will have plenty of plain fun.

The camp literature will answer some of these questions. But a study of bulletins from various camps may still leave you at sea, as these brochures will probably indicate that each camp satisfies all of the criteria. Therefore, the next step is to write, or, better yet, to talk to the camp director.

The suburbs experiment with leisure

"A friend and former colleague, Professor John R. Seeley, is now engaged in directing a large research project on the relations between school and community in a wealthy, upper-middle-class suburb. It is a suburb which has one of the finest public school systems on this continent, one which is often held up as a model to others; in fact, the magnificent new modern high school dominates the community, even physically, as the cathedrals did in the Middle Ages . . . Yet, from . . . what has been reported to me, it is plain that the community, despite all material advantages, is not happy. The parents have neuroses; the children have allergies; and the teachers—well, I don't know. What has gone wrong?

"If we follow the life of the children after school, we can perhaps get some clues. They are being prepared now for their later careers and their later rather hypothetical leisure. Their parents want to know how they have fared at school: they are constantly comparing them, judging them in school aptitude, popularity, what part they have in the school play; are the boys sissies? the girls too fat? All the school anxieties are transferred to the home and vice versa, partly because the parents, college graduates mostly, are intelligent and concerned with education. After school there are music lessons, skating lessons, riding lessons, with mother as chauffeur and scheduler. In the evening, the children go to a dance at school for which the parents have groomed them, while the parents go to a PTA meeting for which the children, directly or indirectly, have groomed them, where they are addressed by a psychiatrist who advises them to be warm and relaxed in handling their children! They go home and eagerly and warmly ask their returning children to tell them everything that happened at the dance, making it clear by their manner that they are sophisticated and cannot easily be shocked. As Professor Seeley describes matters, the school in this community operates a 'gigantic factory for the production of relationships.'

". . . Yet it is all too easy to deride these parents and children . . . I think we can look at [them] . . . rather . . . as explorers. Whereas the explorers of the last century moved to the frontiers of production and opened fisheries, mines, and mills, the explorers of this century seem to me increasingly to be moving to the frontiers of consumption. They are opening up new forms of inter-personal understanding, new ways of using the home as a 'plant' for leisure, new ways of using the school as a kind of community center, as the chapel of a secular religion perhaps."

David Riesman

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Don't hesitate to do this. A good director wants you to feel confident when your child is in his care, and he also wants your understanding and approval of the program of his camp. Whether your contact is by correspondence or interview, you will want to know what are standards of good performance in the above areas. What clues exist to show how a camp measures up?

Are conditions safe and healthy

The American Camping Association and many agencies with camping programs have standards for food, water, sanitation, safety and medical care. No camp should have such serious hazards as unprotected cliffs or dangerous waters. On the other hand, much of the adventure of camping is removed if tree roots are dug up and paths leveled off. There are also some things one must learn to live with, such as a few mosquitoes, snakes, or normal amounts of poison ivy. These are far less dangerous than traffic hazards in city streets.

Every precaution should be taken to protect the camp against an outbreak of illness, but cleanliness is possible in the most primitive of settings; the camp with tile baths is not necessarily more sanitary than the one with pit privies. Careful handling of garbage, proper dishwashing, pure water and good refrigeration are vital in camp and on trips. Accidents do happen once in a while if people are active; a spell of bad weather may bring on some colds, a contagious disease may even be contracted. First aid equipment, with counselors trained in its proper use, should be readily available in all parts of the camp and on trips. A well-stocked and efficiently staffed camp infirmary is a necessity—though it may be a tent, it can meet all of the requirements for caring for patients. Access to a doctor and hospital facilities, and good dental care, are important.

Where do the campers sleep? Whether in a tent or cabin there should be space to live in an orderly, uncluttered fashion. Quarters should be well ventilated and comfortable. Whether the counselor sleeps

with the children or in separate quarters is not important. What is important is to know that there is one person charged with the constant responsibility for your child, and that this person is mature enough to exercise good judgment.

If you want to be sure that the director really appreciates the importance of good health practices, you might ask more detailed questions as, for instance, what differences exist in cleanliness and sanitation standards between the in-camp and out-of-camp activities? And what precautions are taken against the special hazards which various activities involve? It is wise also to discuss a week's typical camp menu, the regulations about between-meal snacks, and whether there is a balance of activity with quiet and free time.

What is the program emphasis?

Camp provides a special opportunity for balancing the push-button life of today, so look for a summer home for your child that is simple—one where the routines of daily living are the shared responsibility of each camper. Nature provides the stockpile of equipment for camp leadership: look twice at a camp that has an impressive physical setup and great display of equipment to make certain that these are not substitutes for a good program. A camp program should not be too dependent on buildings either—what are often described as "town activities" have a place but should not be

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the main program emphasis. There are all too few days in which to develop good camping skills.

Is there a variety of activities?

Years of evaluating camp programs have taught camp leaders that there are two things that add greatly to the educational value of the camp program: to have the campers live in family-size groups of six or eight, with an adult; and to see that the counselor living with these small groups is a person with general skills and interests rather than a hobbyist whose interest is centered in one field. In addition, of course, there will be on the staff a number of experts in various activity fields who can work with the campers on special activities or projects, or serve as consultants to the general counselors.

But a camping catalogue may show pictures of a great many different activities. You need to know whether those activities are available to all youngsters or only to a few. Is there an extra charge for any activities at the camp? What group activities are offered that assure campers of a chance to work cooperatively with others? Are individuals able to follow their own inclinations at some time during the season? Are campers encouraged to try new fields, or to advance in those for which they have a natural bent?

The campers' part in planning

The advantage of a small living group is that it makes it possible for the group to select its activities according to the wishes of its members, while the counselor has a better chance to see that not only these wishes but the needs of each individual are considered in the execution of group plans. To balance the intimacy of the small group, there should be opportunities for larger numbers of children to work together, perhaps on a committee or council planning for special events or trips.

With these factors in mind, a question put to the camp director will give a parent an opportunity to judge how much the

camp encourages children to participate in planning the program. For instance, if you ask what your child is likely to be doing on certain given days, and the director is able to tell you exactly, you may wonder how much planning the campers themselves can really do within the bounds of such an inflexible schedule.

Importance of good leadership

A camp is a day-in, day-out community. During the season it is pretty much up to the camp to supply the youngster with the things he is accustomed to getting from home, school and church. To fill this multiple role successfully, the camp needs leadership of high calibre.

The philosophy of the sponsoring organization of the camp or of the camp director is of primary importance because it will permeate the entire camp atmosphere. This philosophy, in the case of the director, is expressed—directly or indirectly—in many ways: through letters, pictures of the camp, attitudes, as shown during interviews, toward children, staff members and parents. In the case of an organization camp, additional information can be found in the stated philosophy and purpose of the organization.

To find out something about members of the staff other than the director, it might be well to inquire whether there is a good balance of old and young; of former and new staff members; of parents; of couples and unmarried men or women. The finest camps have at least a week of precamp training for counselors, on the site, in addition to the training through correspondence and interviews before camp opens. Try to get some details of what happens in the precamp training period. The director probably has a staff manual that he would be glad to let you see.

Be ready to answer questions, too

Just as you try to find out as much as possible about the camp you are considering for your child, it is reasonable and desirable for the director to find out all

that he possibly can about his potential campers. Often the forms you are asked to fill out are factual and not too much trouble, but sometimes a camp asks diagnostic questions which should be answered thoughtfully and in a spirit of help. Rest assured that in a good camp this information will be treated confidentially and used wisely. If there is no questionnaire at all, take a few minutes to give some pertinent facts to the director: how your child gets on at school, the ages of his brothers and sisters, his special interests and the things you hope he will get out of his season at camp. All of this will make adjustment at camp a happier one and lead to more lasting results. If the child is allowed to help in compiling the information that you send to the camp, he may be more ready for and receptive to what goes on at camp. Be sure, too, that he has the necessary equipment and meets all other requirements for admission.

Cooperate during camp session

During the camping period, cooperate with the director by following directions regarding food packages, visiting hours, telephone messages and so forth. Above all, keep in close touch with the camp through correspondence and visits. The staff may report once or twice during a summer; but remember that every time staff members take time out to write all of the parents of all of the children in camp they are taking time away from their work with the children.

A word might be said here about letters to and from the child himself. Don't expect anything more than cursory notes from him—often with a "please send" post-

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script. Your letters will tell him what's going on at home, but be careful not to give him the feeling he's missing out on family fun. The accent is better placed on interest in his camping experiences.

And afterward

The third phase of cooperation between the camp and parents is the most important of all. "A sense of responsibility" is one of the things parents commonly hope their children will acquire at camp. But all of the training in the world at camp is of no avail if, when he gets home, he again is allowed to be completely dependent on members of his family. This principle can be applied to other desirable attitudes that may be developed at camp. After camp, conferences with the director will help parents find ways of carrying over the child's gains from camp to the home situation. Camp directors frequently say that while parents want to know how the child "gets along" in camp, they are not always willing to hear the less favorable reports as well as the good. Every camp staff member knows that all children are not perfect at all times. But they like children, they believe in them, they want to help them. A conference after the camping session and another one a couple of months later will have a great deal to do with making the values of the camping experience lasting ones.

Sources of information

The foregoing suggestions may help you to find the camp which most closely meets your requirements. It assumes that initial

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contacts have already been made. If this is not so, the first step is to consider reliable sources of information. Many of the leading magazines have Camp Advisory services. The American Camping Association, 343 South Dearborn Street, Chicago 4, Illinois, completed a survey in 1952 which included a listing of over 12,600 camps in the United States. Write Hugh Ransom, the Executive Director, for further information, and when requesting names of camps and camp directors, give basic facts such as the child's age, sex, special interests, the section of the country where you wish him to be, and cost range you wish to consider. The American Camping Association cannot make judgments for you; it can only suggest some places to write and people to contact. It is in the final analysis the privilege of a parent to make the choice. And to the parents of campers falls also a large part of the responsibility of raising camping standards throughout the country by becoming more discriminating in the selection of camps.

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The World Federation for Mental Health announces the 5th International Congress on Mental Health to be held in Toronto, August 14-21, 1954. The theme of the Congress is: **MENTAL HEALTH IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS.**

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How to organize a parent's group

The Child Study Association of America receives many requests for information and consultation about parent groups*—by mail, at meetings and conferences and in personal interviews. Parents recognize very quickly that interest in having a group isn't enough in itself. They know, too, that they need help in getting the group together, in planning interesting programs and in making the work continuously rewarding to the members.

The needs of a group vary according to its members, purposes and community setting. Out of the Association's long experience with parent education activities and parent groups of many kinds, some general principles have emerged that may give you a starting point from which to work out whatever special programs will be sound and useful for your particular group.

What are the administrative details?

As yet, you and your group may not have put your objectives clearly into words. Perhaps it will help you to know what other parents say they would like to get from such an experience.

By and large, parents are looking for two things: first, better ways of handling their children, and second, a wider understanding of child development and of their own roles as parents in bringing up healthy, happy children.

Some parents have a third object in joining a parent group: they want some help with a specific problem with their child that is troubling them. When this problem is one of general concern to many

parents, the discussion can be helpful to the group. Otherwise the help such parents are seeking is better gained in individual contact with trained counselors in schools, clinics or social agencies.

Different programs for different needs

People do not all learn in the same way, at the same rate of growth or from the same kind of experience. What individual members bring to the group in interest, clarity of purpose and readiness to learn and change will largely color your planning. You will probably not satisfy everyone, but if you and your committee are willing to experiment with different kinds of programs, you will give your members an opportunity to find out for themselves what kinds of meetings they get the most from.

Single meetings

For a group that is having its first parent education program, a single meeting is often a good starting place. The program may consist of a lecture by an "authority"—an educator, pediatrician, guidance counselor, case worker from a clinic or family agency, or psychiatrist—whatever your community offers, provided he or she knows children and families and is sympathetic to their problems and needs. The meeting may be based on a film-showing* or on the presentation of a dramatic sketch** illustrating some aspect of child

* Descriptive catalogue of films and rental service available from: Film Library, National Association for Mental Health, 13 E. 37th St., New York 16.

Selective guide on "Mental Health Motion Pictures" available from: U. S. Public Health Service, Washington, D. C.

** Scripts and directions for their use may be purchased from: Distribution Section, National Association for Mental Health, 1790 B'way, New York 16, and Mental Health Materials Center at the same address.

* This article is a condensation of a forthcoming pamphlet on this subject to be published by the Child Study Association of America.

care or parent-child relations. These will have greater value if they are followed by a discussion period, which should be directed by a skilled discussion leader. In some instances you may want to have a panel discussion by a group of "experts," or by parents, or by parents and "experts" together, depending on the topic to be discussed and the people available to take part.

The program possibilities are endless in their variation, depending on the resources and interest of the community and the imaginative approach made by you and your committee. Programs of this kind have been found most suitable for fairly large audiences—anywhere from fifty to five hundred. Usually a general topic is chosen which will interest parents of children of all ages. Sometimes, however, such programs may focus on children of a particular age period, such as the nursery school age, the school age or adolescence. The meetings may be set up singly or as a series on related subjects, ranging from three to four during a school year to a longer series held at more frequent intervals. If there are to be different speakers or leaders for each session, it is helpful to them to know where their contributions fit into the total program.

These meetings should always provide an opportunity for a discussion period in which the members can talk out their response to the material presented, and voice their questions and comments. Of course, the larger the audience the more difficult this will be. Meetings of this kind often serve as eye-openers to a new point of view, and may pave the way for other parent education programs, such as smaller discussion groups. It must be remembered, however, that they are one-shot ventures, which may or may not be successful. They are also stabs in the dark, since they allow little opportunity to appraise whether they have met the group's needs, have really lived up to the group's expectations, or have given the group ideas for other programs.

Continuous discussion groups

Many parents express dissatisfaction with the large single meeting. Often they prefer smaller groups in which they can discuss their particular interests and concerns about their children and where they can play an active part. These groups are called by a variety of titles—"child study groups," "parent discussion groups," or "family life education programs." They all deal with aspects of child development and parent-child relations. Their aim is to cover not only factual information but also to recognize the importance of feelings and attitudes. The extent to which they achieve this aim is largely dependent upon the skill and understanding of the leader.

While parent education groups differ in the extent to which they deal with feelings and attitudes, none of them provides, or should provide, "group therapy." Therapy is directed toward helping troubled people understand and overcome the unconscious bases for their problems of personal and social adjustment, and requires specialized professional skill.

Discussion groups vary considerably in structure and procedures. They sometimes cover material pertinent to children of all ages, but more frequently they deal with one particular age group. Occasionally they are made up of both mothers and fathers, though it seems to be increasingly difficult for both parents to come to meetings together.

The procedures in a discussion series usually follow one of two different patterns. Sometimes a discussion group plans a series of topics and an order in which they wish to discuss them. This can be valuable if the subjects are chosen by the whole group and represent their real interests. But often parents may want to spend more time on topics which loom up and gain greater importance to them as the meetings progress. With the leader's help, the group can then decide whether to follow the original plan or to change.

Other groups may be set up with a general objective rather than with a fixed agenda or series of topics to be covered at stated meetings. The discussion then is more flexible, can develop closely in relation to the wishes of the group members and can make full use of the live, meaningful material from the members' own daily experiences. Through sharing their individual experiences, members broaden their understanding, and see opening before them a variety of choices as to what they may be able to do with and for their children and themselves. The discussion, however, must neither be allowed to ramble over too wide a range nor be confined to a limited, personal topic. Although this may seem to be contradictory, free discussion will need constantly to be focused and, through wise direction, kept closely related to the needs of the whole group.

This type of discussion is most effective when the group meets for a longer period of time, anywhere from 8 to 15 or more sessions, at weekly or bi-weekly intervals. It requires a leader who is not an "instructor" but who uses his leadership to help the group attain its own goal of better parenthood.

Who can lead a parent group?

In selecting the leader the group may feel that they can proceed in a more orderly fashion if there is someone to serve as chairman, and so they select one of their members who can best serve this function. Or, there may be available in the community a parent or other person who has had some limited or extensive training as a discussion leader. It is the job of both the chairman and the trained lay leader to help a group discover its purpose and stick to it. Both can help the group to see wherein lie agreements and disagreements about child rearing, but the trained lay leader is likely to do this more skillfully than a chairman. They both can serve as "discussion leaders," but in most cases are not equipped to provide authoritative information on child development

and family relations or to handle the complex aspects of group interrelationships.

Some groups feel, though, that they are interested not only in each other's experiences, but that they want additional understanding based on more factual information. They may then decide to ask representatives of various professional fields to attend one or several of their meetings as resource people. For example: a teacher, on educational methods and goals; a pediatrician, on child health; a psychiatrist, on child development; a social worker, on family relationships. The responsibility for leading the discussion still remains with the chairman or lay leader.

Parent groups may also choose as leaders people from various professions directly related to family life and child development—such as social workers, psychologists, public health nurses, guidance counselors, pediatricians, religious educators—who can draw on their special backgrounds to add to parents' knowledge of

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child development. There are some in these groups who are trained also as leaders of parent education groups. They can combine their professional knowledge with the special skill of helping parents work together toward the deeper understanding they are seeking.

It is important that in the selection of a leader your group consider carefully the limitations as well as the assets of the leaders that are available. You should plan a program that the leader is qualified to carry through successfully by reason of his training and experience. If you expect something that the leader is not equipped to do, you may have a disappointing experience.

How can you organize the group?

Our experience has shown that ordinarily it is wise to have a committee who will pool its ideas and share the responsibility for working out all the planning and administrative details for whatever program they decide on. The following are some of the situations in which a parent education group may be formed, and suggested first steps in organization:

1) A community where the interest comes from one or more parents and where there is no established group which can logically sponsor the program:

Find a few other interested people to form an organizing committee.

2) The total membership of a small group, or some of the members of a larger group, are interested in having a parent education program, but, in both cases, their number is too small to provide for a rewarding exchange of experience or to warrant the time, effort and expense needed to carry out an effective program:

Contact other groups in the community which have parents among their members to discuss the possibility of joint sponsorship of a parent education program. An inter-association planning committee can then be formed to work out details.

3) An established group (such as a PTA, parent group in a Sunday School or

community center) decides to have a parent education program for a small group of interested members or for its total membership:

The total membership should decide upon the general purpose of such a program, and how it fits into the rest of the program of their organization. Details can be assigned to a planning committee.

What do you expect from the program?

As the planning committee starts its work, it is important that they and those they represent be clear about the *primary purpose of the group* for whom the parent education program is to be planned. For example, is this a project of parents who originally organized with some other objective—as to establish a cooperative nursery school, or to raise funds for special programs for handicapped children? If the parent education part of their program is to remain clear in its content and purpose—namely that of better understanding of child development and parent-child relations—then it is most important that these particular meetings should focus clearly on this purpose, and that other projects (such as fund raising for special programs, community action, etc.) be handled either through separate channels, or at least in a completely separate and different kind of meeting.

Membership in a parent education group is directly affected by the nature of its sponsorship—on whether it is sponsored by an independent committee or a larger organization. Where the program is planned for the total group, it is assumed that all members are eligible to participate. When it is for a subgroup, eligibility has to be clearly defined and accepted by the membership of the sponsoring group or groups. This is not as likely to be a problem for a single meeting, at which attendance can generally be unlimited, as it is for a continuous series, where membership needs to be kept to a smaller number if there is to be an opportunity for all members to participate freely.

Before the first meeting, the sponsoring group or planning committee should come to definite decisions on the following: the purpose of this particular parent education program; the method and length of time appropriate for achieving this purpose; the size of the group that is practical for its purposes; meeting time; an appropriate meeting place; a leader or leaders to conduct the program; fee to cover cost of the program; arrangements for publicity and registration. The committee should maintain responsibility for the administrative details until the program is completed.

Meeting places for parent education groups are many and varied. In some communities there is little choice. Where there is, the planning committee should consider its choices carefully. For a large meeting, there is usually no conflict since the group is likely to want a hall where the program can be presented most effectively and where the audience can comfortably sit, hear and see; the availability of such a place is the deciding factor. It is the meetings for small groups that generally pose problems. Often it seems most convenient or even necessary for the members to take turns meeting in each others' homes. Such an arrangement is certainly conducive to sociability and a feeling of "at-homeness," but may bring with it practical and social complications. For example, will some members be included just because of the availability of their homes as meeting places? Will the host and hostess be so involved with taking care of their guests that they cannot really take part in the meeting itself?

If a community center offers a comfortable and attractive room, everyone can come on an equal basis—as a group member and for one purpose only—to participate in the meeting. People are then free to enter the group on the basis of membership requirements, without other personal considerations to complicate the matter.

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ings the question of membership presents, at times, a real problem. The objectives of the program should determine the size of the enrollment. A plan for full discussion and interchange will generally mean a group of between fifteen and twenty-five. Experience has shown that *registration* is the only practical way of limiting the size of a group. Ordinarily, one of the main purposes of a continuous series is that the members increase the depth and scope of their knowledge and understanding of themselves and their children. This in turn means regular attendance if the members are really to develop their ideas and explore their feelings.

But how can there be any assurance of the regular attendance necessary to make a series of meetings truly meaningful? It is of primary importance that group members clearly understand ahead of time the purpose and method of the group, and why regular attendance is necessary. Equally important is having an effective leader. Both attendance and leadership tie in with the question of *fees*. While in some cases it is not feasible to pay the group leaders, in general they deserve

compensation for their time and effort. The group members will have an added feeling of responsibility and commitment if they share the expenses of the meetings.

Each group will find its own way of applying the suggestions given here. Your plans will probably develop slowly and may not succeed completely without some experimenting to find what is most suitable for your group and your community. But thoughtful planning and the wise use of all your community resources can make whatever you do an important, enriching experience for you and your neighbors and friends.

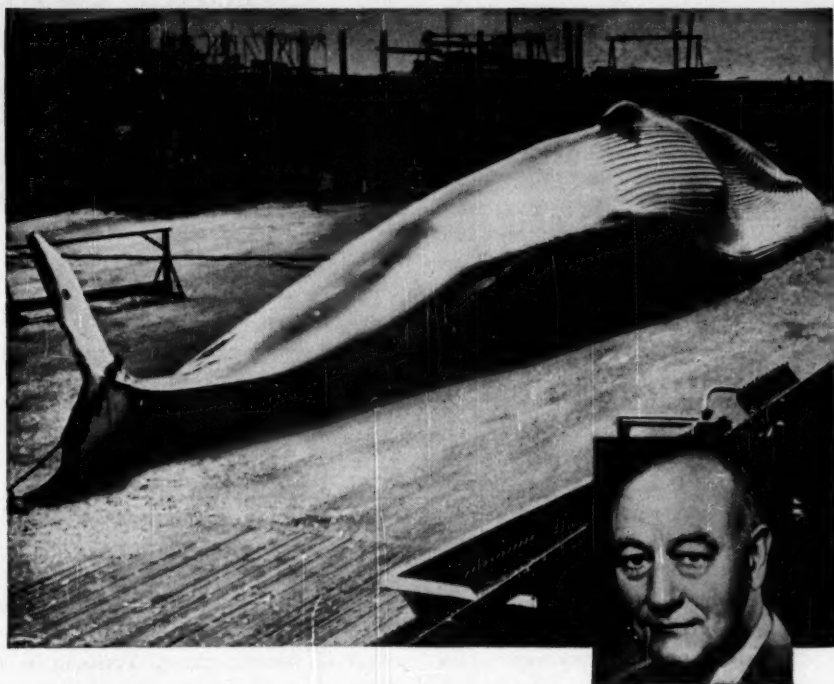
Social Work Yearbook

The 1954 edition of the *Social Work Yearbook* has just been published by the American Association of Social Workers (1 Park Avenue, New York 16; price \$6.00). A description of organized activities in social work and in related fields, it contains informative articles on such topics as family life education, child welfare, group psychotherapy, guidance and counseling, maternal and child health, etc., and an excellent list of national voluntary and public agencies.

What are "active" sports?

David Riesman

"I argued too that such a program [for training movie critics] might help us get rid once and for all of the current distinction between active and passive recreations—'active' being such things as sports, hobbies, and square dancing, and 'passive' such things as movie-going, TV-watching, and other things parents and teachers wish their children wouldn't do. For I am convinced that this is not a real distinction: much leisure which appears to be active may be merely muscular: its lactic acid content is high, but there may be little other content, or contentment. And conversely, such supposedly passive pursuits as movie-going can obviously be the most intense experience, the most participative . . . And so I wanted to teach people to enjoy the movies as participants in a fine performance, and not merely as a place to neck, to eat popcorn, or to pass the time out of the old folks' reach. In fact, I was particularly eager to develop courses just for the old folks in the understanding of popular culture, thinking in this way not only to open up to them a wide range of imaginative experience but also of helping to close the gap which separates the young, who have been raised with movies, comics, radio, and now TV, from the old who have come to them late if at all, often without the linguistic and emotional vocabularies necessary for their understanding."



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He knows whales better than their own mothers do—he actually "milked" a whale to find out that whale's milk looks like cow's milk but is "too strong tasting to be pleasant." We refer to that famous explorer, Roy Chapman Andrews.

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drown if kept under water. "Whale" in World Book is informational, extremely interesting and authentic.

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Science says—

Parents' attitudes effect the child's dental health—both in the thumbsucking stage and later, when it's time for him to visit the dentist

Should parents worry about thumbsucking?

By J. H. Sillman

Very often we hear parents say something like, "My Johnny sucks his thumb. I don't know what to do with him any more. I've tried everything to make him stop and it doesn't help." Perhaps at some time you have said these words yourself.

Thumbsucking has long been a source of particular annoyance and anxiety to parents. It is true that past generations considered thumbsucking a "bad habit." They were told it would cause their children harm in many ways, from crooked teeth to large tonsils. This "scare" approach to thumbsucking is no longer approved by the dentist or by the pediatrician. Yet many parents still remember the old threats about what would happen if the child sucked his thumb..

Are parents justified in worrying about thumbsucking? What should they do about this problem? Accurate information is now available to assure parents that they need not be so fearful if the child sucks his thumb. The author has in the past twenty years been engaged in a progressive study on the growth of the jaws. For the first time serial evidence is available from birth to sixteen years of age.

Such first-hand factual information is essential for an accurate appraisal of the effect of thumbsucking. Periodic histories were taken and casts were made for each child from individual impressions of the upper and lower jaws.

From a group of sixty children who have been followed continuously from birth, there were twenty thumbsuckers. The age at which these children stopped sucking their thumbs is as follows: two before two years of age; five between two and four years; seven between four and six years; one between six and eight years; two between eight and ten years; three continued after ten years of age. A child was classified as a thumb- or finger-sucker if he had sucked his finger for over a year or if the sucking had caused displacement of teeth regardless of time.

Sucking in infancy is more than just a process for obtaining food. It is necessary to relieve oral tension. It is pleasurable, comforting and important for the child's development. Prior to and during the eruption of the first set of teeth, your baby will bite, chew, gnaw on anything that he can get into his mouth. This, like suck-

ing, is a normal activity and should not be interfered with. At first, the infant will thrust his jaw forward, and later from side to side. This is his way of easing oral tensions and making contact between the jaws in order to help the erupting teeth push their way through the gum. Toys or teething rings of proper size and firmness which fit readily into the child's mouth provide him with some gratification during teething. His thumb or fingers are also handy for him to insert into his mouth. Therefore, if you expect your child to make more use of the objects that you have thoughtfully provided, you should also give him enough attention so that he may learn how to manage them. At least in this way you are giving him a choice. Otherwise he may continue to use his thumb even after he has learned to hold a toy.

This does not mean that you have to be constantly handing your child a toy to bite on every time he drops one. Nor does it mean that you should pull his thumb out of his mouth when you see him sucking or biting it. A casual, gentle approach is the best way to meet this essential physiologic activity. Give the child some of your time and approval so that he will know that you are there to help him. Yes, it takes time and patience, but it pays.

The exercise of chewing on hard food, like carrot sticks, celery and hard bread, is an aid to teething and jaw development, and is helpful in satisfying oral needs. Your child will be delighted to use his gums for chewing long before he gets his molars. In any event, as long as you don't make too much fuss during this period, the sucking and biting will have little effect on his first set of teeth. Even if the teeth are displaced due to sucking, the condition will generally correct itself when the sucking is discontinued.

After the age of four, thumbsucking and the possible permanent displacement of teeth must be taken more seriously. It should be understood that only forceful

sucking of long duration will move teeth out of line. Such conditions are usually brought about by disapproving, heckling, nagging or punishing parents, turning a natural, normal act into a detrimental habit.

Fortunately many children have stopped thumbsucking by this time so that there is no permanent harm to the teeth. Those children who continue to suck, do so to fulfill a definite need. One child may take a little longer to be weaned from his thumb than another. If the child is assured of his parents' love and understanding, and has satisfactory activities in and outside the home, he will usually stop sucking of his own accord. But some children need help to work out this problem successfully.

We don't want parents to feel that this matter can be safely ignored indefinitely. On the contrary, thumbsucking may be an expression of a troubled child, and, at times, counsel may be advisable. On the other hand, if you are worried about the effect on your child's teeth, your dentist or orthodontist is in the best position to help you determine whether there is really any relation between the child's thumbsucking and the position of his teeth. He may find that your worries are needless. Even though your child's bite is poor, it doesn't necessarily mean that thumbsucking was the cause.

Let us examine a few children from the author's study, who will illustrate some of these facts. Charlotte at five years had a slight protrusion of the teeth. At eleven years the protrusion was worse, yet she never sucked her thumb. If Charlotte had been a thumbsucker it might have been thought that the poor bite was the result of sucking. But such was not the case. Fortunately, she received orthodontic treatment, and a good bite was established.

David sucked his thumb from infancy to six-and-a-half years of age. No fuss was made about his thumbsucking. Many pseudo-remedies were advised by the mother's friends but she did not use any of them. From birth to sixteen years of

age, throughout the study, David's bite was excellent.

Charlotte had a marked protrusion of her front teeth, yet she had never sucked her thumb. David had an excellent formation which was not changed by thumb-sucking.

Let us compare two sisters, Althea and Susan. Both had an underlying poor bite. Althea was not a thumbsucker, and her teeth did not protrude. Susan sucked her thumb from infancy to eleven years of age, which made her teeth protrude. This protrusion was superimposed upon a poor formation.

Although Susan was never scolded openly about her thumbsucking, nevertheless there was always an atmosphere of disapproval and tension which the child perceived. Susan at eleven years became interested in her appearance, and of her own volition asked her dentist for help in order to stop her thumbsucking. The dentist suggested painting the thumb with a bitter solution so as to serve as a reminder. The mother was told that Susan wanted to be helped, and that she should not make Susan feel the idea was being imposed on her. Otherwise it would be met with resistance. Susan had the desire to be independent, bought the solution with her own money and succeeded in helping herself.

Obviously the underlying poor formation of both Althea and Susan had nothing

to do with sucking. However, in Susan's case the prolonged sucking made her front teeth protrude. It is important to remember that Susan asked for help when she was ready to be an independent and responsible person.

Fred sucked his thumb from birth till four years of age. His parents made no fuss about it and accepted this activity as part of his growing up. When a baby sister arrived, Fred's sucking increased and became more forceful. His front teeth were pushed out of line. Children are impressed with facts. His dentist made casts of his teeth and showed Fred exactly what he was doing to them. He spontaneously stated, "I don't want to have crooked teeth. I won't suck my thumb anymore," and he didn't. The progressive improvement was very noticeable and encouraged him to refrain from sucking his thumb. The protrusion of his teeth due to thumbsucking was corrected spontaneously in less than a year. Fred was made happier by the improvement and was very proud of his accomplishment.

Bernard sucked his thumb from infancy to one-and-a-half years of age without any noticeable effect. His parents, who had been passive in their attitude up to this time, now took an active part in trying to stop the child's thumbsucking. He was slapped and scolded whenever he was caught. All Bernard would do was go off in a corner where he could not be seen, and suck all the harder. As the sucking became more entrenched his teeth protruded more. With a child added to the family annually, the parents had little time to continue to harass Bernard. His brothers and sisters now became articulate and they would repeat what they heard, such as, "Bernie is a baby." He continued his sucking until he was nine years of age. At that time he became a most helpful member of the family, willing to do chores, for which he received a great deal of praise. He voluntarily stopped sucking his thumb. At sixteen years of age, he still had a marked protrusion which was

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due to his prolonged and forceful thumbsucking brought about by punishment.

Remember Fred? He was helped and he voluntarily gave up thumbsucking. The protrusion of his teeth corrected itself. Bernard was punished and he sucked harder and longer. His protrusion increased.

Thumbsucking is a natural act in the first few years. Most children will stop of their own accord with little or no harm to

the position of their teeth. If the act is prolonged and forceful then the parent should be aware of this being a sign that the child may be troubled. Parents who want to give the child constructive help will keep the child in mind rather than his thumb. Professional guidance and help may sometimes be necessary, but punishment and interference by the parents are not justified by the facts.

Your child's first visit to his dentist

By Harold K. Addelston

The mother who faces with equanimity her child's first visit to the dentist is a rarity. Many conscious and unconscious emotions contribute to the apprehension, uncertainty and tension surrounding this experience. If dentistry has been, at moments; unkind to the parent, she may fear for her child's comfort. She may very well wonder about the child's behavior. Will this be a disciplinary problem? How does she cope with it? What, exactly, is her role in this project? What will her child expect of her? What will the dentist expect of her? And is this all really necessary?

It is, of course, necessary. The early detection and repair of all the defects in the primary dentition (baby teeth) is the only hope that toothache, premature loss of teeth with the possibility of malocclusion due to this loss, and infection, may be prevented. At the age of three, or when all 20 primary teeth can be seen in an even line, ten in the upper jaw and ten in the lower, baby is ready for his introduction to dentistry. An appointment should be made for the time when the small patient is usually at his best. Ap-

pointments just before a much needed nap are not desirable. A child with a tendency to gag should not see his dentist after a meal, nor should the easily fatigued child have an appointment at the end of a day. Mother should be the best judge of the times when her young one is brightest and happiest, and it is at those times that appointments are most successful.

Several days before the appointment, some mention should be made of it in a casual and relaxed manner. It can be phrased to appeal to youthful pride and curiosity, those two motives and incentives to which we appeal with the greatest success in our dealings with children. The comment may be something like this: "Now that you're such a big boy, perhaps you've grown up enough to go to see my friend, the dentist. And do you know what he'll do? He'll look at your teeth." The trick here is to refrain from forcing the issue, or forcing his interest. Any anxious feeling, and disparity between the words which are spoken and the true feelings behind them are immediately detected by a child. Overemphasis, the too-hearty approach, the saccharin approach,

all are grounds for suspicion in the young. It is most helpful if a detailed description by the parent of what goes on in a dental office, and what the dentist can be expected to do at a first visit, is *avoided*. A dentist is handicapped by the parent who promises that "all he'll do today is look," or "take X-rays," or "give you a ride in his chair." The dentist, himself, at the first visit, is guided by the interest, attention span, serenity and cooperation of the child patient, and is prepared to make as much progress in his examination as possible, utilizing all these factors to their utmost. Understandably and quite properly, he resents the limitations imposed upon him by a parent's ill-conceived promise to the child. But he is bound by such a promise, since trust, confidence and affection are the emotions he is trying to instill.

The child patient, upon his arrival at the dental office, is entitled to the same courteous and considerate reception by the office personnel as is an adult. The social amenities are followed, introductions are made, opportunities for play and entertainment are pointed out, and the parent instructed to relinquish all initiative and authority while still, by her physical presence, reassuring the child. Only by such relinquishment can a rapport be established between dentist and patient. It would be normal for a child to turn to the parent for instruction, answers to questions and guidance under these strange circumstances. But it can be quickly established that in a dental office the dentist is the leader, if the parent remains passive and allows the dentist to establish an uninterrupted relationship with the patient. That this is difficult for the parent is conceded, but enough emphasis cannot be placed upon the desirability of momentary self-effacement while maintaining a cheerful, relaxed, interested silence during the all-important introduction of the child to the dental room. The very fact of the parent's presence gives the child the sense of security to which he is entitled.

As for the dentist who is greeting his

newly-arrived young patient, what of his point of view? He knows that this visit and those immediately following will determine the child's life-long attitude toward dentistry. A traumatic experience here and now can lead to the development of a poor dental patient, one whose fear of dentistry can lead to a lifetime of conflict during which his conscience will urge dental care and his apprehension postpone it. A pleasant experience here and now can lead to another and another such pleasant visit so that the acceptance of dental treatment can be associated with the satisfaction of his curiosity and pride.

The dentist who is sincerely interested in children, who enjoys their moods and understands the wellsprings of their behavior, will take the new patient cheerfully by the hand and offer to show him around. A leisurely stroll through the dental room reveals many wonders to small eyes: a chair that goes up and down; a big, big camera; a machine that blows air; a machine that squirts water! Here is material for trying, testing and examining for visits to come. His dentist companion knows that his patient's greatest fear is the fear of the unknown, so on their tour of inspection everything is named in terms comprehensible to the child, everything is explained, and everything is touched by the dentist and the patient. And when the child has at last seated himself in the big chair and has had his ride up to the dentist's level, the

Atlantic City meeting

At the forthcoming National Conference of Social Work, the Child Study Association of America will sponsor jointly with the National Association of School Social Workers a round table discussion on **Approaches to Parent Education in School Settings** on Thursday, May 13th, from 2 to 2:30 p.m. The Association recently joined the National Conference as one of its Associate groups.

same procedure is followed. He is told the reason for his ride up in the chair, why the towel is placed over his suit, what the little sink with the running water is for, and what the little mirror is for. The wise dentist follows the concept of Tell . . . Show . . . Do . . . in every dental procedure until the patient has understood that he can believe and trust everything the dentist says, until he has acquired the confidence and experience that accepts without questioning all dental procedures.

"Well," you say, and rightly, "that's a tall order, and how is it accomplished?" It can be accomplished by again and again, at visit after visit, explaining what is to be done at that visit, showing the child all the things that must be used in order to do what you have said is to be done, and then doing exactly what you have said you would do in the way you have said you would do it—and nothing *more* or *less*. No surprises, no false assurances that it will not hurt, if it will, no deviation in the sequence of Tell . . . Show . . . Do . . . if the dentist is to win the confidence of the child patient. At the end of the visit, the plans for the next visit may be mentioned to him and explained. If at enough "next visits" the promised work is done, with no deviation from the promise, a child will feel that the dentist is trustworthy. A child patient wants to know truthfully what is happening and what will happen next time. He wants to be liked and admired for his good behavior and when the behavior leaves something to be desired, he wants to be liked anyway for himself alone. The careful building of confidence, the kindly interest in the child as a person, the words of praise and admiration for the child and his behavior, all contribute to a good relationship between the dentist and the patient.

The dental office which takes into consideration the young patient's basic desires will reserve adequate time for him. A leisurely, relaxed and friendly spirit will prevail. A minimum of pressure will be put upon him so that the tendency to



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rebel will have no opportunity to exhibit itself. His small requests will be fulfilled cheerfully by all the members of the staff, his questions will be answered in the most matter-of-fact manner. The word "no" will be reserved for matters of physical safety. Small choices will be given him where possible. And all these things will be done so that his energies and interest may be channelled uninterruptedly into that new experience upon which he has embarked—dentistry.

Public school pamphlet

Since the public schools of New York City are the concern of nearly a million families whose children are pupils, and of every taxpayer as well, there should be a large readership for a pamphlet recently issued by the Public Education Association. *A Citizen's Guide to the New York City Schools*, published by the Community Education Committee of the PEA, describes the school system, its workings and problems and points the way for intelligent citizen participation in its improvement. Single copies are available for 25c from the PEA at 20 West 40th St., New York 18.



Book reviews

How To Live With Your Teen-Ager

By Dorothy W. Baruch

New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953. \$3.75

The table of contents of this new book by a popular author indicates the warmth and informality of her approach to the problems of adolescence in this particular era and culture. Dr. Baruch is well aware that parents are frequently betrayed by their own earnestness. She knows that in their efforts to blend the newer psychological concepts with the time-honored rules for character building they often feel baffled and helpless, and she shows a welcome sympathy for their dilemma in the section of her book called "Your Feelings Are Important."

It is good to find, too, that the author understands the child's conflicting needs, on the one hand, for freedom to make his own decisions and, on the other, for firm guidance to keep him from making disastrous ones. A section entitled "He Doesn't Have To Obey That Impulse" indicates Dr. Baruch's awareness that the young person's drive for fulfillment is most fruitful where it includes an acceptance of some limitations.

Further, Dr. Baruch reminds grownups that sex becomes a pervasive and often confusing force in the lives of adolescents. We adults today are sometimes tempted to feel that "frank talks" can solve every difficulty, without realizing that no terminology, however scientific, can cover the subtle varieties of individual experience. We will be less likely to make this mistake after a reading of Dr. Baruch's comments on teen-agers.

Despite these virtues, there are enough faults in the book to make an overall assessment somewhat difficult. The case histories, or analogies, though they are doubtless based on real examples, seem contrived: instead of being recognizable parents and children these people appear to be manufactured creatures designed only to typify a point of view. Dr. Baruch understands very well the roots of human behavior, and the vast complexity which the conflict between opposing goals can produce within a human being. Of this comprehension and insight she gave outstanding evidence in her recent book, *One Little Boy*. In this present volume, however, such evidence is lacking. Not only are the "characters" mere line drawings, the problems are one-dimensional, too. When people are faced with jealousy, anxiety, oedipal confusions, the author seems to say that drawing attention to the nature of these troubles will in itself provide the cure. "Why yes, how simple," they all say, "now I understand" and then stop forthwith being jealous and anxious and confused!

Dr. Baruch knows that people are not like this. In her highly commendable attempt, however, to put fundamental truths into simple terms, she has fallen into the error of making the truths themselves sound simple. They are not simple. If, for instance, the oedipal conflict were simple there would be no psychological necessity for it to become, as it must in any civilized society, buried in the unconscious.

Again, in a well-meant effort to per-

suade parents that they should not deliberately build a wall of silence or disapproval between themselves and their children, she more than suggests that no wall of any sort need exist. She seems to forget, here, that the young person often has a great and real need to separate himself from parental understanding and, if he needs understanding, to seek it elsewhere than in the parent who is identified in his mind with his own infantile dependency. True, she states this fact, but in her examples she ignores its bearing on the situation.

The book has so much which is wise and warm and kind that one especially regrets the presence of these shortcomings.

HELEN S. BURGESS

Design for Mothehood — *Survive It and Enjoy It*

By Gail Little

New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1953.
\$3.00.

Here is a book to relax over and enjoy. The author, who teaches school in New Orleans and is also a housewife and mother of two children aged six and nine, offers a series of lively homespun observations on her adventures and travails in raising these two youngsters. With wisdom and humor she sifts through the current interpretations of child care methods, rejecting those which are not practicable for her own and her family's needs and applying those she finds meaningful.

Although the book touches only lightly on many day-to-day problems, the overall approach is refreshingly sound and realistic. Occasionally, it is true, Mrs. Little verges on the dogmatic, and draws heavily upon humor to gain her point, as when she generalizes on the resistance of fathers to being a "Vital Factor" in baby's early life. In all fairness, however, while we recognize the importance of encouraging fathers to take an active role in the baby's

life, we must admit that some fathers are more skillful in handling the budget than in handling an infant. The author tries to reassure these more passive fathers that "There are later stages in babyhood where daddy will come into his own."

Two excellent chapters are devoted to exploring some facts and fallacies concerning the second child. These include various aspects of the sibling relationship, shifts in the family constellation and the need to recognize each child's individuality and needs. Mrs. Little says, "A second baby has many of the behavior problems of a first and then some special ones all his own inherent in *not* being the only child around," and again, "It is very important to remember that what you are going through a second time your second child is going through a first."

To this reader the most delightful chapter is the one which discusses the children's contacts with, and influence on, other members of the family clan: uncles, cousins, aunts and, of course, grandparents. It is here especially that one senses the basically healthy and comfortable relationship which the author must have had with her own parents. In reviewing the shortcomings as well as the advantages of grandparents, she points out that although grandpa may bring ice cream to the kids one half hour before supper and grandma has definite rules in *her* house where *she* is boss, children do respond to their grandparents' love and devotion and are enriched by this relationship.

Even though Mrs. Little says in her preface that her book is written in the firm conviction that "the best system in the world often will not work," she also feels that the real problem in parent education is to get across the idea that the professionally trained child guidance counselor is not an ace-in-the-hole to be used only as a last resort. She urges parents who are worried to avail themselves of help from such specialists as a "short cut to mental health and emotional well-being."

HELENE S. ARNSTEIN



Books for children—

when they come in series



The growth of a new kind of "series books" for children is a noteworthy phenomenon. These are not "series books" in the old sense, as we have known them—*The Rover Boys*, *The Bobbsey Twins*—wherein the same characters reappear each year in continued adventures, but are books related to each other by a pattern, an idea or the repetition of a certain word in each title, and published in identical format.

One of the first such series to appear, and the longest-lived, is Bobbs-Merrill's *Childhood of Great Americans* series (\$1.75), addressed to the young reader of about seven to nine. These small volumes, invitingly set in large type with wide margins and attractive black and white illustrations, tell lively stories about the childhood and times of celebrated personages in American life—men and women from the pilgrim William Bradford to Franklin D. Roosevelt. These little books have excellently served their dual purpose: as introductions to chapters in our history and to our heroes and heroines, and as easy-to-read stories for the not-yet-skilled reader. Among some seventy-five titles published to date, three especially good ones are *Abraham Lincoln: Frontier Boy*, by Augusta Stevenson; *Jane Addams: Little Lane Girl*, by Jean Brown Wagoner; and *Lou Gehrig: Boy of the Sandlots*, by Guernsey Van Riper, Jr.

Another valuable series that has continued through the years, published by Houghton Mifflin (\$2.50), has presented various immigrant groups in America and described their particular contribution to our country's life. These stories, all written by Clara Ingram Judson, bear such titles as *They Came From Sweden*, *They Came From France*, *They Came From Scotland*. The informative background is well used in the construction of interesting fiction for ten- to twelve-year olds.

For somewhat older readers, Winston's *Land of the Free* series (\$2.50) also deals with ethnic and national groups who helped to make America: *Climb a Lofty Ladder*, by Walter and Marion Havighurst; *Watergate, A Story of the Irish on the Erie Canal*, by Herbert Best; *Door to the North*, by Elizabeth Coatsworth, and many others. Most of the stories in this series are inspiring and superbly written.

Outstanding among the series have been the *Landmark Books* published by Random House. Here epochs, persons and events which marked turning points in American history are presented most attractively to the reader of approximately nine to twelve. Some forty of these books, to date, have been published and have maintained a high level of excellence. Many of them have been written by distinguished authors and historians. The overall plan of this series offers historic

perspective and insight into our nation's development from *Prehistoric America*, by Anne Terry White and *The Voyage of Christopher Columbus*, by Armstrong Sperry, to *Mr. Bell Invents the Telephone*, by Katherine Shippen. Invitingly printed and illustrated, these volumes are fine values at \$1.50. A new series, *World Landmarks*, promises to be equally successful in pointing up significant world events and people who influenced them. Among them are *Alexander the Great*, by John Gunther; *The Man Who Changed China*, by Pearl Buck; *The Battle of Britain*, by Quentin Reynolds.

For the same age, the *American Heritage Series*, published by Aladdin Books (\$1.75), has some twenty titles, presenting dramatic events and persons in America's past. This year's *The Long Black Schooner*, by Emma Gelders Sterne, is excellent.

Signature Books, published by Grossett & Dunlap (\$1.50), also offer nine- to eleven-year olds readable biographies. Here outstanding personalities are highlighted rather than the sweep of history. The writing is rather uneven, and seems to have been done to a formula. Among the good titles are: *The Story of Joan of Arc*, by Jeanette C. Nolan; *The Story of John Paul Jones*, by Iris Vinton.

In the *Winston Adventure Books* (\$1.50), history is presented through stories about youthful adventures in many of the exciting epochs of our past. Fine end-paper maps enhance these stories, many of which offer valuable and entertaining reading. Good titles are: *Little Giant of the North*, by Alida Malkus; *A Boy for a Man's Job*, by Nina Brown Baker; *Powder Keg*, by Donald E. Cooke.

Conspicuous among the new series are the *First Books*, published by Franklin Watts. These attractive, square books cover a wide variety of subjects: nature (trees, snakes, bees); various peoples (Japanese, Israeli, Eskimo). There is a *First Book of Ballet*, by Noel Streatfeild; a *First Book of Magic*, by Edward Stoddard; and a *First Book of Science Experi-*

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Ages 8-12 \$2.75

The Macmillan Company

60 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 11, N.Y.

ments, by Rose Wyler—some forty titles so far at the welcome price of \$1.75. Well printed for easy reading, profusely and effectively illustrated, the subject matter in these books is addressed to a wider age range than their format would suggest.

Many fascinating subjects are dealt with also in the *Real Books*, published by Garden City. In more traditional book size, and at the modest price of \$1.25, these address the reader of about nine to twelve, and cover a range of special interests from stars to baseball. Included also are some satisfying biographies of George Washington Carver, Christopher Columbus and others. The material and presentation are generally excellent. One might, however, quarrel with their pretentious and misleading title.

To mention a few other excellent series: the *All-About Books*, published by Random House (\$1.95), are a fine group, written by experts in a variety of special fields—*All About Dinosaurs*, by Roy Chapman Andrews; *All About the Sea*, by Ferdinand C. Lane. Good readable print and copious illustrations make these volumes most inviting to information-loving youngsters from nine to twelve, or even older. The *Gateway* series, for about the same age, also published by Random House (\$1.75), and illustrated with photographs, are less attractive in appearance and are pedestrian in presentation, but each fills an informational need.

Grosset & Dunlap's *Big Books* (\$1.00)—*The Big Book of the Wild West*, by Sydney Fletcher; *The Big Book of Real Jet Planes*, by Clayton Knight; *The Big Book of the Real Circus*, by Benjamin Brewster—make excellent picture books for the five- or six-year old and the simple text that accompanies the large pictures will make good reading for older children as well. *Everyday Science Stories*, published by Messner (\$1.60), present science facts about magnets, electricity, weather, etc., in easy-to-read story form. The subjects are well selected for the interests of chil-

dren from eight to ten. *Family Activity Books*, published by Knopf (\$1.50), describe a variety of crafts and hobbies for parents and children to enjoy together.

Several of these series have become the basis of book clubs. While this machinery for greater distribution may be welcomed by some, it is to be hoped that joining such a club will not confine the young reader to one type of reading. Most children prefer and should be offered a more varied diet.

Inherent in the "series" format are certain plus values, in addition to the assets of each volume. They induce a pleasant sense of familiarity, and to the purchasers—parent as well as child—they offer assurance of the repetition of enjoyment. "Adding to" sets makes shopping easy, especially since certain series attain a popularity among children that is catching. The buyer needs to be reminded, however, that even in the best of these series there is necessarily a variation both in the age appeal and in the quality of the writing. The group label does not, therefore, release the purchaser from the responsibility of discrimination in selection. Quantity production and distribution of a series permit the publisher to give a lot for the money: better paper, print and illustrations than, perhaps, in the publication of a single volume at the same price. All in all, these series are a great addition to the current offerings for children and are winning more and more young readers.

FLORA STIEGLITZ STRAUS
for the Children's Book Committee

Note: Series of books in the 25c field were reviewed in the Fall, 1949 issue of *CHILD STUDY*, in an article entitled "For a Quarter or Less."

Overheard in the park

Mother to small daughter: Laura, I'm ashamed of you, hitting that little girl! You don't see me acting like that with other people. Now you go right over and tell her you're sorry or I'll bat you over the head!



Parents' Questions

These questions are selected and discussed
by the Child Study Association
staff, and the answers written by its various members

TV and the very young viewer

We've just acquired a TV set and, to my surprise, I find that our three-year old is fascinated by it. She's discovered how to turn it on by herself, and she'll sit there watching it for hours if I let her. This certainly makes life easier for me—but I wonder if it's good for her at this age. I hate to keep dragging her away from the set. What do you think?

Mrs. P. V.

You're quite right in feeling that long sessions of sitting still and just "looking" aren't good for a three-year old. At that age there is much for a little one to do and see and explore; she needs to be actively experiencing many things that acquaint her with her world. TV may be one of these, but in limited quantity and brief sessions. Besides, there aren't many programs that are suitable at that age. There are a few, such as "Ding Dong School," and if you make a point of finding these for her, she'll begin to get the idea that TV is for special times. Then you'll have to keep an eye on the program and on the clock, and be ready to offer some other activity when that program is over. You may be tempted to leave her there safely watching a fine puppet show, and return to find her deeply engrossed in a shooting western. Sometimes, young children are fascinated just by the motion and activity on the screen,

whether or not they understand what goes on there. They especially enjoy the animated cartoon commercials. This will probably do no harm if it is kept down to occasional watching of brief duration.

You will, however, need to keep the little girl occupied elsewhere while an older brother or sister, or an adult, is tuned in to a program which might be too exciting or frightening for a three-year old.

I.Q. tests for every child?

My neighbor's nine-year-old daughter took some I.Q. tests which my neighbor tells me gave her a very high rating and indicate that she has not been using her capacities to the full in school or outside activities. Her teacher and her parents are working together to find some special projects that will interest her and give her a chance to bring her abilities into play. This sounds like such a good idea that I have been wondering whether I should obtain such tests for my nine-year-old son. Do you think all children should be tested in this way? Mrs. B. R. L.

Your neighbor has been fortunate in having the test results interpreted in such a way as to make them of positive value in planning for the child. The report could have been equally useful even if the tests had

revealed that her child had limitations in certain areas of her intellectual capabilities. In that case the child's program at home and at school could have been planned to give her opportunities for success and to keep the experience of failure at a minimum.

You do not say why your neighbor's daughter took the tests. Most experts working with children agree that routine intelligence testing is a sterile procedure and that, like X-rays, it should be done only when there is evident need for diagnosing a child's capabilities or the trend of his total personality development. If a child plays well with friends, has no special problems with school work and seems relatively happy in his home relationships, there would not seem to be any reason for the parents to arrange for special psychological evaluation. If there is indication that such an evaluation is needed, clinical psychologists who work with children are equipped to give a "battery" of tests which not only measure the child's intellectual capacity, but also contribute to an un-

derstanding of the child's interests and aptitudes and his feelings about himself and the world around him.

One hears a great deal about a person's "I.Q." these days. But it is seldom, if ever, possible for parents to use the knowledge of a child's specific intelligence quotient in a way helpful to their child. Such a measurement of intelligence, in itself, is of minor significance compared to the many other factors which all together make the child the person he is.

Slow physical development

My fifteen-and-a-half-year-old daughter is a fine, healthy adolescent. She has friends, does well at school, and on the whole gets along with the family. She has not begun to menstruate, whereas all her friends have. She seems to worry about her difference, especially after the girls have had a gab fest and discussed their various menstrual problems. The doctor says she is normal physically, and that she will probably menstruate within a year. How can I help her accept this fact comfortably?

Mrs. J. F. C.

Are you a bit worried also — do you trust the doctor's diagnosis? When a child does not develop as rapidly as others of her age it is almost impossible to accept it without some apprehension. This is true in the early years with teething, walking, etc., and later with dating, marrying, etc. A great premium is placed upon learning and growing quickly, these days. If we stop to examine this atti-

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tude we often realize that children develop at an uneven pace in some respects, and that doing things "early" is not so important.

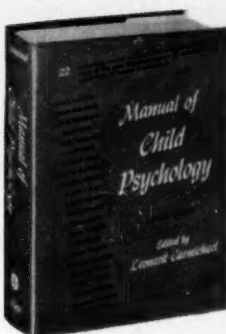
If you do have faith in your doctor and you can allay your own anxiety, then perhaps you can contribute to your daughter's comfort. Girls do feel proud of their sexual development and her friends are bound to boast. If you have reassured your daughter that she is within the norm and that her sexual maturity will have to take its own course just as other things have, she will be better able to show confidence in the presence of her friends. They, in turn, might even learn to be more accepting of individual differences.

Children's book meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association was held November 10th, at the Dalton School auditorium. The subject for discussion was "Parents' Lists and Children's Likes," and the speaker of the evening, after a panel discussion, was Dr. Leland Jacobs, Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University.

In an attempt to find out "What makes a book good for children?" and to analyze the validity of reading lists for children compiled by adults, Miss Margaret C. Scoggin, Superintendent of Young People's Work, New York Public Library, submitted a series of questions to a group of six young people. "What is your earliest recollection of a book? Do you read comics and series books because your friends do? Do children read books which adults think are good for them? What is good taste in reading?" were among the topics explored.

The answers, both humorous and earnest, were far from unanimous but seemed to indicate that adults need not bear down too hard on what the child "should" read. It was the panel's opinion that if a child liked a book, it was a "good" book for that particular child. Dr. Jacobs upheld this point of view, in that he felt there was no one book every child should read. The quality of greatness, he said, is not alone in the book or in the reader, but rather depends on an emergent quality which comes into being when the mind of the writer and the mind of the reader meet. In the final analysis it is up to parents to create the kind of environment in the home that will stimulate reading and above all, his advice was: "Have faith in your children."



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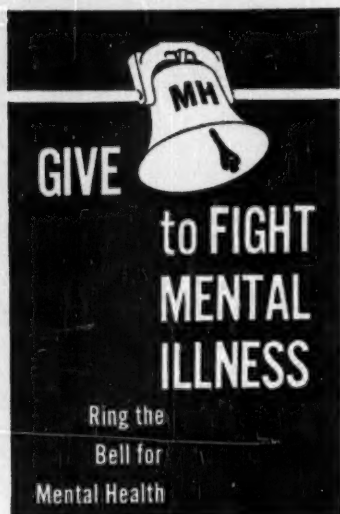
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Family Life Studytour

The fifth annual Marriage and Family Life Studytour will sail for Italy, Israel, Greece, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, France and Austria on June 28, 1954, returning in late August. This educational tour is sponsored by the State University of New York and the National Council on Family Relations. It is open only to persons interested in Family Life study. For further information, write the director, Dr. Eugene P. Link, New Paltz, N. Y.

Editorial elections

Dr. Meyer F. Nimkoff has recently been elected Editor, and Dr. James H. S. Bossard Chairman of the Editorial Board of *Marriage and Family Living*, journal of the National Council on Family Relations. Dr. Nimkoff is Professor of Sociology at the Florida State University. Dr. Bossard is Director of the William T. Carter Foundation at the University of Pennsylvania.

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